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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/686,998	10/16/2003	Patrick J. Sweeney	029815-0103	7428

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FOLEY & LARDNER LLP
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EXAMINER

MILLER, CHERYL L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3738

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	03/12/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/686,998

Applicant(s)

SWEENEY, PATRICK J.

Examiner

Cheryl Miller

Art Unit

3738

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 February 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) See Continuation Sheet is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 10, 12, 18, 22, 28, 37, 43 and 66 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3, 5-9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 41, 61-65, 68 and 69 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 16 October 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 11/15/06.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- ☐ Other: _____.

Continuation of Disposition of Claims: Claims pending in the application are 1,3,5-13,15,17,18,21-23,25,27-30,32,34,36-39,41,43,61-66,68 and 69.

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on January 5, 2007 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 3, 5-9, 11, 13-15, 17, 21, 23-25, 27, 29, 30, 32-34, 36-41, 62-65, 68, and 69 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because reference characters "52" and "56" have both been used to designate upper vertebrae in figure 12. It is suggested to change 56 to 52. Further "48" and "58" have both been used to designate teeth on pg.6. 48 should be changed to 58. Both "24" and "16" have been used to designate locking ring in figure 14. It is suggested to change 16 to 24. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are

not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 32, 34, 36, 38, and 62 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 32 is drawn toward a vertebral prosthesis (compatible with discs). Therefore, an artificial disc as claimed is not within the scope of the preamble. Claims 34, 36, and 38 depend upon claim 32 and inherit all problems associated with the claim.

Claim 62 does not further limit independent claim 61.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 3, 5-9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 41, 61-63, 68, and 69 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Rabbe et al. (US 6,344,057 B1, cited in IDS). Rabbe discloses a system comprising a support or shaft (21), first and second endplates (22 or 83), two artificial disc implants (23, located where the natural disc are removed therefore, are replacing the discs) attached to the endplates (see fig.3), and a pedicle screw retainer (57 in fig.3 or 107 in fig.9) having a top (superior thickness), bottom (inferior thickness) and side (plate length surface) with aperture having screws (108, 5) *adapted* to fit through a pedicle. Rabbe disclose the shaft/support to be adjustable (by threads 32) and the endplates to screw onto the shaft/support (by threads 32/41).

Claims 1, 3, 5-9, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 61-65, and 68-69 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Strnad et al. (US 6,296,665 B1). Strnard discloses a system comprising a support or shaft (102), first and second endplates (18, 20), an artificial disc implant (bone graft material, disclosed to replace both the vertebral body and two discs, therefore, it may be considered a disc replacement; fig.8b, col.5, lines 45-48; col.6, lines 22-24, 36-40) attached to the endplates, and a pedicle screw retainer (202) having a top (superior thickness), bottom (inferior thickness) and side (plate length surface) with aperture (204) having screws (col.6, lines 12-15) *adapted* to fit through a pedicle. Strnard disclose the shaft/support to be adjustable (see fig.8a, 8b, 9).

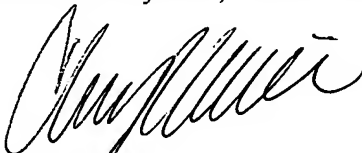
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Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Cheryl Miller whose telephone number is (571) 272-4755. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 7:30am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Corrine McDermott can be reached on (571) 272-4755. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


Cheryl Miller


BRUCE SNOW
PRIMARY EXAMINER